

WASHINGTON, DC - Today Congressman Rob Wittman joined members from across the aisle to support and pass (311-107) H.R. 965 Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network Continuing Authorization Act. The Act, when approved by the Senate and signed by the President, would permanently authorize this popular Bay program.

"I'm passionate about restoring and preserving the Chesapeake Bay. Its always a good day when we can come together in a bipartisan fashion to recognize the historical, cultural and recreational significance the Bay provides to millions in the watershed", said Wittman.

The Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network awards grants to projects that conserve, restore, and interpret natural, recreational, historical, and cultural resources in the Chesapeake Bay watershed which encompasses six states and the District of Columbia. The network also awards grants to projects that link Chesapeake Bay "gateway" sites with trails, watertrails, and scenic roads.

"I have seen first hand the benefits of this legislation, and making the program permanent will play a large part in our goal to restore the health and beauty of the Chesapeake Bay", added Wittman.

There are now more than 150 gateway sites and 1,500 miles of watertrails within the network. The Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act requires that the federal share of Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network projects not exceed 50% of each project's total cost. The remainder of the cost must be borne by a non-federal source, which grant recipients may make by using in-kind contributions, such as services or materials.

Wittman spoke in support of the bill on the House Floor, you can watch his remarks online:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dSiL4tQ_Uk

Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He was elected to his first full term in November 2008 and serves on the Natural Resources Committee and the Armed Services Committee where he is the Ranking Member of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.